

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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Bulgarian Living Conditions

1. The Bulgarian people are tired of the Communist regime. However, no one dares show his discontent for fear of suffering sanctions of the police. Many have still not lost their hope that something might bring about the downfall of the present regime or a softening of its more rigid directives.
2. Informant states that joy and exuberance are not known in Bulgaria today; it is rare that one sees people smiling, and all seem afraid. Workers do their jobs as if it were a burdensome duty. The salaries they receive are insufficient to satisfy the minimum needs for existence. In each family husband and wife are obliged to work in order to improve the living conditions of the family. In spite of the existing situation, informant states that he had never heard of any active sabotage carried out by any possible anti-Communist organizations or by workers. It is not impossible that some such act might have taken place, but it is difficult for such events to be known to the public because of the severe press and radio control.
3. The people know only what the regime wants them to know. For instance, they do not know where a portion of the production of the country goes. Last winter, which was particularly cold, the people suffered a great deal because the government distributed an insufficient quantity of coal for heating purposes, and that distributed was of poor quality; this in spite of the fact that Bulgaria possesses numerous mines of excellent coal whose production exceeds the national needs.

Miscellaneous Information

4. Bulgarian citizens can circulate freely throughout the country except for an area 15 kilometers in width along the Bulgarian frontiers.
5. Citizens who do not possess a special permit are not allowed to enter or circulate in the port area of the city of Burgas.

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6. Private post and telegraph domestic correspondence is not officially censored in Bulgaria. Informant believes, however, that correspondence coming from and going to foreign countries is censored.
7. There are allegedly still 5,000 Jews in Bulgaria. Many of them hope to leave the country but it is very difficult for them to obtain an expatriation permit. According to informant there is no official discrimination against Bulgarian citizens who are Israelites. Actually, however, many things are not permitted or allowed to Jews and this because of social obstacles placed rather than because of actually codified decrees.
8. A large number of Soviets who are members of diplomatic and consular missions, as well as of military and commercial missions reside in Bulgaria. All these persons live in buildings especially assigned to them and have meeting places, shops, and places of entertainment for their own exclusive use. They are not allowed to frequent Bulgarian families nor to show that they are friendly with the local population. Informant states that the Soviets' conduct in official relations with Bulgarians is most correct. During the past year it has been noted that the Soviets seem inclined to follow a less retired and more modern way of life. The Bulgarian population hopes that this might bring about an improvement in the standard of living also for other peoples of the Eastern Bloc.
9. In Bulgaria it is not officially prohibited to listen to foreign radio broadcasts. However, those caught listening are sure to undergo police sanctions sooner or later. In spite of this, foreign radio broadcasts are listened to by many Bulgarians. It is very difficult to pick up and listen to with sufficient clarity the broadcasts of the "Voice of America" and "Radio Free Europe". These broadcasts appear to be strongly jammed by local radio stations. Reception of the Italian and French Broadcasting Systems is fairly good, particularly at 7:00 a.m. and at 9:00 p.m.

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